Strategy Research Project

COALITIONS: MORE THAN JUST FLAGS AT THE TABLE

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USAWC CLASS OF 2011

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
21-03-2011	Strategy Research Project	

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Coalitions: More Than Just Flags at the Table

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
Lieutenant Colonel John G. Howard

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
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8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army War College
122 Forbes Avenue
Carlisle, PA 17013

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
History has shown that War is an enduring human condition. As long as man has interests that he is willing to contest there will be battles for nations to fight. Alliances, treaties, and coalitions have been a fundamental element of warfare throughout recorded time. It is a rare case where a state is able to wage war in isolation for any protracted period of time. This calls for nations to craft alliances in order to pursue their national interests to the full. The ability of the strategic leader to craft and sustain coalitions is a fundamental skill that needs to be understood by all members of any coalition in the modern age. While current US doctrine allows for allies in battle it does not create the space at the strategic level that might allow coalition synergies to be developed to the full. The challenge of the contemporary US strategic leader is to fully grasp this issue in such a manner that will allow the coalition to truly gain the exalted goal of unity of effort.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Multi-National Operations

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
UNCLASSIFED	UNCLASSIFED	UNCLASSIFED	UNLIMITED	26	

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

COALITIONS: MORE THAN JUST FLAGS AT THE TABLE

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel John G. Howard

TITLE: Coalitions: More Than Just Flags at the Table

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 21 March 2011 WORD COUNT: 5,934 PAGES: 26

KEY TERMS: Multi-National Operations

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

History has shown that War is an enduring human condition. As long as man has interests that he is willing to contest there will be battles for nations to fight. Alliances, treaties, and coalitions have been a fundamental element of warfare throughout recorded time. It is a rare case where a state is able to wage war in isolation for any protracted period of time. This calls for nations to craft alliances in order to pursue their national interests to the full. The ability of the strategic leader to craft and sustain coalitions is a fundamental skill that needs to be understood by all members of any coalition in the modern age. While current US doctrine allows for allies in battle it does not create the space at the strategic level that might allow coalition synergies to be developed to the full. The challenge of the contemporary US strategic leader is to fully grasp this issue in such a manner that will allow the coalition to truly gain the exalted goal of unity of effort.

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> I was determined from the first to do all in my power to make this a truly Allied force, with real unity of command and centralization of administrative responsibility. Alliances in the past have done no more than name a common foe and "unity of command" has been a pious aspiration thinly disguising the national prejudices, ambition and recriminations of high ranking officers, unwilling to subordinate themselves or their forces to a commander of different nationality or service.
>
> —General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Later in his life General Eisenhower reflected on the nature of the multinational coalition that he led into Fortress Europe in 1944. It was a determined alliance swiftly drawn together, clear in its strategic objectives but still untrusting of each other in many essential ways.[1] As a multinational coalition the Allied Forces possessed a clear desire to create strategic effect against Nazi Germany. General Eisenhower as the Supreme Allied Commander understood that crucial to mission success was his ability to craft and sustain a collation. By mid 1944 much of the world had grown weary of war and yet both Nazi Germany and the Japanese Empire remained as unconquered enemies. Up to this point many countries other than the US had already committed significant amounts of blood and treasure. Failure would not be an option for the coalition.

The role of Supreme Allied Commander was a unique one for an American General in 1944. Leading such a substantial and complex multinational coalition was not something that senior US military leaders had any depth of experience on which to draw. Like any coalition operation the task in front of them would not be simple. There were time constraints, resource constraints, and no shortage of political disputes. On the positive side the strategic objectives were clear and aligned, the enemy was easily identified, and the rules of the game appeared to be clear if not direct for those who

were at the operational and tactical levels. To be effective the coalition needed a US military leader who understood all of this and more.

Any student of history knows that both ancient and modern history has been intertwined with armed conflict, unbridled aggression, and martial intent. The fundamental truth remains that humans have interests they have been and are still willing to kill for. This is an enduring truth not only at the individual but also at the state level. In this respect we are not unlike primates who will fight over territory sometimes to the death if pushed or an opportunity exists. Such concepts as fear, honor, and interest as related to us by Thucydides remain as relevant today as they were in the ancient world when seeking to understand why wars are fought.[2]

History has revealed that alliances, treaties, and coalitions have been a fundamental element of warfare throughout recorded time.[3] While the complexity of modern conflict may well have brought additional burdens to the leaders of modern coalitions, there are some essential elements that remain eternal to the nature of coalition warfare. The ability of drawing allies into the fight and making them effective in accordance with lines of operations remains crucial for the modern strategic leader and planner. Currently the US sits as the only dominate super power on the international stage. It is difficult to consider a national security event where the US would act in isolation in any significant or enduring manner. Developing a profound understanding of coalition warfare by those senior US leaders that will command the grand alliances and coalitions of the future will greatly assist future US foreign policy objectives.

Historical Context

From antiquity, history is replete with examples of effective coalitions that have been crafted by skillful statesmen in support of national interests. Thucydides' writings

from the Peloponnesian Wars illustrate how the key leaders manipulated the strategic issues of the day in order to create strategic effect.[4] The many years of war between Athens and Sparta are well recorded and show clearly that while both nations had strengths they also had weaknesses. Each nation used alliances and treaties as tools of foreign policy in support of national interests to build on strengths and mitigate weakness. It is worth noting that initially both Sparta and Athens had very different views as to how to gain benefit from their allies.[5] Sparta merely established oligarchies amongst her allies whereas Athens chose to seek contributions in the form of monies. Naturally these were approaches that suited each state at the time. As the wars progressed greater reliance was placed on the importance of treaties and relationships with others in the region.

Seeking, crafting, and sustaining alliances is not something new when considering US foreign policy. The nation was forged in a war for independence against a strong nation. The success of that war rested on an alliance with France, at that time a world power. The strategic leaders of the day saw such an alliance as the only realistic option to gain the goal of nationhood status. The War of Independence was not to be America's last war; the value of coalitions was not lost of future generations. In 1861 the first shots were fired in what was to be known as the American Civil War. Throughout this war the Confederate States attempted to establish alliances with both Britain and France in an endeavor to assist their cause. Although ultimately the Confederate States were to be unsuccessful, the understanding of engaging with allies and partners on a global scale had been accepted as an effective tool for US foreign policy.

The global conflict of WW I saw the US join the struggle in the later years of the war, throwing the full weight of its national power into the fight in 1917. At this stage the US was still emerging as a strategic actor on the world stage. It had yet to take the lead in a multinational conflict. Key to the success of the US military effort in WW I can be found on the battlefields of the Western Front. It was here under the leadership of General John J. Pershing that US military forces came of age on the international stage. General Pershing maintained a strong desire to keep US troops as a US entity. The leaders of the WW I collation had other plans. They sought the piecemeal commitment of US forces on to the battlefield in support of the British and French Armies. While that might have been in the best interests of Britain and France, it was not in the interests of the US. Pershing succeeded in his aim and the US learnt a valuable strategic lesson as a relatively new and junior coalition partner.[6]

In just over 20 years after the “War to end all Wars” the world was again engulfed in global conflict. Once more alliances on a global scale were formed to fight another World War. The so called “Grand Alliance” of WW II was most effective in bringing about the demise of both the Nazi State and the Japanese Empire. While the US joined the alliance as a formal military partner only after two years of the war against Germany, it contributed heavily with economic and diplomatic effort from the earliest months of the war. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 the full weight of the US elements of national power was gradually brought to bear against both enemies. Once committed to war as an open and full partner, the US began to assume a stronger leadership role in the multinational coalition. By committing so much effort to the war the

US was assured a strategic position at the table. This expanded role also brought with it the heavy burden of coalition leadership.

While many nations took part in the allied campaigns of WW II, the reality of the political environment meant that the UK and US made the strategic decisions in many respects. It was through the experiences of WW II that the US began to realize and assume the strategic leadership role that it would carry forward for the rest of the 20th and into the 21st century. The US emerged from WW II as one of the big five nations who would shape the new world order in accordance with their views. [7] As a new global leader and a victor of the war, the US found itself in a strategic position of global military dominance that it still enjoys to this day. In this position it could afford to be less accepting or understanding of allied effort than perhaps it needed to be in the past. As a national power it had come of age.

The Korean War of the early 1950s offers a good insight of what might be accomplished with a wider and more diverse selection of allies if the willing can be corralled and guided in times of need. The war might not have concluded in the desired strategic end state for the US, but the allied coalition of the war offered some significant lessons for the future.[8] While in the early stages of the war it was very much a US - South Korea alliance, in short order the UN coalition grew to 17 countries.[9]

On 25 June 1950, the United Nations Security Council unanimously condemned the North Korean invasion of the Republic of Korea, with United Nations Security Council Resolution 82. Two days later the US President ordered US military forces to assist the South Korean Government. This was the starting point for US direct military action in support of the South Korean allies. During the relatively short three year period

of combat operations the US successfully led a multinational UN mandated mission. The Korean War offered the US an opportunity to once more exercise global leadership building on recent experiences gained during WW II.

As the leader of a diverse multinational campaign, the US had to consider and apply allied effect from a much wider range of partners than it had recently experienced in WW II. Some allied contingents were as small as the 44-strong unit from Luxembourg while other were as strong as the 63 000 British contingent or the 590 911 strong South Korea Force. Leading the coalition became a demanding task. While Commonwealth Force elements appeared to fit nicely together to the Americans, internally this was not the case.[10] There was still much to consider in order to reduce the friction between nations. This was true even for many of the Allies who had shared recent combat experiences, similar cultures, doctrine, equipment, and even strategic goals. The lesson of this war for the US was one of understanding how to work with allies before the coalition was formed.[11] Of course maintaining similar if not shared capabilities, doctrine, and personally knowing the key individuals who fought with the US would have added great value as the war was being conducted. Disappointingly these lessons do not appear to have been absorbed into the US military understanding since 1953, despite being documented.

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report states that “sustaining existing alliances and creating new partnerships are central elements of U.S. security strategy.” This and other key documents do not state that the US will or must lead the coalitions.[12] Multinational operations in East Timor in 1999/2000 offer an insight in this respect.[13] In September 1999, under UN Security Council resolution 1264, an Australian led regional

intervention force deployed to the island now known as Timor Leste. In support of the intervention force the US deployed forces that provided limited yet unique capabilities that greatly assisted the mission. In this case the US did not lead in the traditional or doctrinal approach familiar to contemporary US strategic planners.

While US national interests in the region might not have been significant, the potential destabilizing effect in Indonesia and the wider region were without doubt of concern for the US. At the strategic level the US needed to tread softly if Timor Leste was to emerge as the world's youngest nation from under the heel of 25 years of Indonesian occupation. In this situation the US political leaders chose to allow a strong and well established regional player, Australia, lead a multinational regional coalition until such time as a UN force could be made available. This option allowed for a more acceptable and effective regional force to be applied to the problem at all levels in a less direct manner than might otherwise have been prosecuted under a US lead.

In selecting this path the US did not incur the political and resource demands that are traditionally associated with being the lead nation. In addition the US was able to avoid the deployment of any ground combat forces which was a clear national interest at that time. This course of action allowed the US to provide a positive regional engagement in a measured manner. At the same time it allowed the US to retain further engagement options should the situation escalate. Such a strategy provides an interesting insight into a potential template for future US foreign policy in those areas where the US national interests maybe less clear.

Since late 2001 the world has been consumed by what the US has labeled as the Global War on Terror. What was clear to many before the dust settled in New York was

that there would be a requirement for an effective global coalition to prosecute a war across a range of environments and over a protracted period of time. It would not be a short war. While the physical strike at that time was on US soil, many like minded countries also felt the effects of the attack that has become known as 9/11. These countries came willingly and quickly to the call to arms, forming the central core of the coalition that still prosecutes the Global War on Terror.

Coalition operations in Afghanistan currently sit as the centre piece on the strategic chessboard of many countries in respect to the Global War on Terror. The coalition in Afghanistan offers a wonderful insight into what could be possible, and sadly what is not. Over the nearly 10 years that the military coalition has been in country, the size and scope of the troop contributing nations has changed greatly. In the early days there were only a few nations with boots on the ground. Today there are some 48 countries with a wide range of non-traditional allies deploying troops and capabilities in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.[14] Unsurprisingly, nations will participate in pursuit of their own national interests and not necessarily in the interest of the US, perhaps a consideration that can be lost on US planners.

Afghanistan remains an extraordinarily complex affair. It is not Fortress Europe of the 1940s, nor is it Korea of the early 1950s, or East Timor in 1999. To compare it as a similar strategic problem to these or other environments would be to oversimplify the issue inappropriately. The operational environment of Afghanistan offers nothing but extremes. The demanding physical environment, the diverse cultural mix, and the range of national interests that have drawn the coalition together only serve to intensify what Clausewitz would call friction.[15] This provides the strategic planner in HQ ISAF,

Central Command, and Washington with additional burdens when attempting to craft a national strategy.[16] No matter how sound the strategy might be, without an effective coalition to fight the campaign, the military tools will only strike bluntly against the problem. The enemy in such operations will seek those weaknesses that can be exposed and exploited in order to defeat the coalition at every step. The ISAF coalition has the potential to be the preeminent coalition that the modern world has known. Sadly, after nearly a decade of effort, there is still a daily struggle to gain the synergies that an effective coalition should be able to generate.

The alliance in Afghanistan has to interact with much wider and more complex military, social, and humanitarian issues than has been the norm in the past for military operations. These nontraditional responsibilities have been drawn down to an even lower level than previously experienced. Gone are the days when the military commander or planner can be simply the expert military man focused on military objectives. He or she needs to be just as comfortable when considering the other elements of national power as they are in their own command post, applying the military tools against an enemy target. The modern military commander and planner must be adept in engaging allied nations at political and military levels if unity of effort is to be achieved. This becomes more critical for those allied nations that might not have the clear separation between the political and the military arms of government as found in the US. In order to create synergies from a coalition the US needs to better understand what make a coalitions function at every level.

Elements of an Effective Coalition

Just as good ingredients will make a good meal, there is much to ponder in preparation to ensure that a coalition is effective. The key ingredients of a successful

coalition are effective leadership, cultural understanding, understanding of national capabilities, understanding of national interests, a level of trust and familiarity across the force, and an agreed, accepted and understood strategy. Not surprisingly none of this is easily achieved in the real world. Nor can success be achieved in short order without a significant level of mutual “give and take” across the coalition. This approach generally does not sit well with many in the military uniformed world who thirst for clarity and direct action against an identified enemy.

General Eisenhower clearly understood that it was leadership that provided the fundamental glue that builds and binds a coalition. In a more contemporary coalition operation, General Wesley Clarke also shared the same understanding as to the importance of the strength of a coalition through leadership during operations in Kosovo.[17] This concept is often reflected when the will of the coalition is selected as the friendly centre of gravity. Gaining unity of effort then becomes a very demanding task for the leader of a coalition who will have so many other demanding issues to draw him or her in other directions. As with all such undertakings the selection of the right leader cannot be understated as it is crucial to success. No longer can the best tactical leader be selected simply because he or she was impressive in the tactical environment; the risks are greater, the goals are greater, and the battle is infinitely more subtle and intricate in its conduct. At the strategic and political level when planning for coalition warfare a nation’s leaders should seek a military leader that can best navigate coalitions through the complex environments of the future. This may require some adjustments to the current professional development and selection process for senior military leaders.

Not surprisingly the current generation of senior US military leaders are a product of their professional training and experiences. In the main, their formative professional education was focused on the requirements of the Cold War. The professional milestones through which all passed in order to attain high office may not have best prepared them for the current or future battle. Many of these experiences were ones that valued skills that may hold less relevance today than they did yesterday. While many serving officers have a range of operational experiences on which to draw, they are often limited in coalition experiences outside of the US military umbrella. This is more sharply defined for those individuals who have not had to physically rub shoulders with a foreign force in the field on a daily basis. In this respect these officers are disappointingly unprepared for the strategic roles in which they may be employed from a coalition point of view.

The mainstream US military mind is shaped for combat. It is trained to be direct, detached, dispassionate, and inculcated with a strong sense of US honor, pride, and "right." The indirect approach that is often best suited to the building of coalitions is not something that the US military mind finds comforting. This appears to be understood at some levels with a growing strategic desire to accept a level of "Mission Command" across the US Army of the future.[18] Accepting a change in culture is not a simple process. The US military culture is greatly shaped by the wider US society. As in any society individual and collective views are developed from a young age. This brings additional cultural barriers and norms which take time to unwind once in the coalition environment.

Understanding, accepting, and allowing for cultural differences is vital to gaining unity of effort from coalition partners. The more diverse the partners are from the US norm, the greater the need for this requirement. This can be just as applicable across a multinational force as it is inside any of the larger elements of the force. All large organizations will have cultural barriers within the sub-tribes of the organization. Gaining deeper cultural understanding is much more difficult to achieve than simply learning a new language. It requires one to put aside individual beliefs and reach out. A conscious step away from the comforts and norms of home into another man's shoes is demanded in order to allow individuals to appreciate the issues. This step cannot be achieved overnight. It is part of a long and deliberate professional development journey.

Winston Churchill once said that the UK and the US are two countries separated by a common language. If this is true for two such intimate and outwardly similar allies, how much wider then is the cultural gap when considering coalitions as diverse as the current 48 members of ISAF.[19] Language is of course the first wall over which the strategic leader must scale in building his or her coalition. Gaining language skills should be encouraged across the force as this will better enable all those who need to deploy and work with allies. Language should not be learnt in isolation or in an academic vacuum. While knowing the correct grammar of a language is important, of even greater importance is understanding the national character and social norms that accompany the language. A student of language needs to have a cultural experience to reinforce the non verbal communication skills that are needed to communication in so many ways. The requirement to learn, study, and experience foreign languages and

culture would be of significant merit in the development of the professional body of the US Armed forces.

While a greater level of language skill may well be desirable, the short term reality is that such skills are not generally resident across the force. As language skills are still being developed most leaders tend to search for the assistance of an interpreter. Effectively employing an interpreter is not an easy skill to master. In order to make best use of an interpreter in an operational environment, additional skills need to be taught. It is not a simple matter of asking for words to be verbally communicated. In some non-western cultures non-verbal communication is more important than verbal communication.[20] While some may well suggest that an interpreter may effectively cross the language and cultural divide on behalf of a strategic leader, just as much can be lost through the inappropriate use of an interpreter. This is even worse if no personal relationship has been established with the third party or if a culturally inappropriate interpreter is brought into the situation. In addition to developing language skills across the force a greater understanding of when and how to employ an interpreter will greatly assist with the development of relationships and untimely the strength of a coalition.

Understanding cultural is a fundamental requirement for effective coalition operations. Sadly, acknowledging and comprehending culture, other than US culture, is not something that the wider US military society has a strong record of. Evidence of this can be found both in and out of uniform throughout history.[21] Of note a key doctrinal leadership reference for the US Army, FM 6-22 October 2006, makes only limited reference to the elements and concept of culture. [22]

While some may like to suggest that the US military officer of today is already culturally savvy, that reality is far from true. There is very little in the professional development of a mainstream US military officer that allows for an understanding of anything but the US military. It is often only when a US military officer is seated at the table in a foreign field that his cultural education begins in earnest. This is often too little and too late in the career of a strategic leader to have any real effect for the mission at hand. An example of this can be found within the halls of the US Army War College. For many students at the College their year at Carlisle is the first time that they have been exposed in any genuine and personal manner with a diverse range of allied nations. How many US students and staff interact with the International Fellows speaks volumes as to the level of cultural savvy and experience possessed by the current and emerging senior US military leaders. While some students and staff do take the opportunity to engage, a few disappointingly do not consider it to be a beneficial investment in their professional development.

Being able to identify, understand, acknowledge, and employ to best effect various national capabilities that allied nations bring to the battle space is a key component of effective coalition life. Not all nations will or can bring comparative or interoperable hard capabilities with their forces.[23] Few, if any, will have the same level of technology that is enjoyed by the US but that should not mean that they have nothing of value to offer the coalition. Accepting that others do not share the economic wealth and weight of the US will go some distance to understanding this issue in respect to capabilities across US led coalitions. Many smaller nations have to live within very tight fiscal constraints in order to meet their national defense needs. Often this can be at the

expense of some of their defense capabilities. This can appear somewhat unfathomable and at times uncomfortable for US planners and leaders that enjoy a unique level of national support that is often not shared by other coalition members.

Some allies will bring soft capabilities to a coalition which may fill capability gaps that the US may have.[24] This is especially true when the environment is culturally foreign to the US forces. Understanding what each nation brings to the table can only be enhanced by an early understanding of who people are, how they think, why they think as they do, and how they train. Key to unlocking this element is a broad outreach program that allows leaders and planners to engage and understand what the strengths and weakness of the allied nation's military capability. Over time with a sound outreach program the cultural barriers will erode and stronger coalitions will form through the bonds of shared personal experiences and relationships.

Often during coalition military operations the host nation will provide some level of indigenous military capability as part of the coalition. It may only be a residual or token effort or it may be a robust and effective military tool. Understanding the skills, equipment, doctrine, and motives of host nation military forces is another key enabler to a developing a stronger coalition. This can be an important issue if the US intends to employ large indigenous military forces as part of a strategy. An example of this can be found during the Vietnam War with the employment of the South Vietnamese Army in support of US strategy. The battle conducted near the village of Ap Bac in January 1965 highlighted a poor understanding of the desire of the AVRN to engage the enemy.[25] The AVRN approach greatly frustrated the US leaders at all levels and ultimately impacted on the strategy. The level of trust between the two coalition forces at all levels became

an issue of strategic importance as it was negatively impacting on unity of effort for the coalition.

Individual national interests will drive why and how nations chose to commit to a coalition. Not all nations will join a coalition for the same reason or with a clear and openly declared intent. What makes individual nations join a coalition is a question that strategic US leaders and planners need to ask and answer as part of their planning process. This is another key element to building an effective coalition. Just as the lead nation will have a primary national interest, other nations will arrive in pursuit of their own national interests. Often one nation's interests may compete with another's. Planners and leaders need to be fully aware of competing national interests and the cultural dynamics that flow from them within the coalition. Finding common ground in respect to shared national interests is the pathway forward that will assist in this respect.

National sovereignty and employment caveats for non US forces offers some of the most frustrating experiences for the staff planner and leader. Often US planners might like to suggest a task for a coalition member without considering the second and third order effects for that national commander. Even how the task is phrased and transmitted to a coalition leader or staff member can cause concern, especially if the tasking message needs to be communicated in another language and in short order.

While US joint doctrine outlines direction in respect of command and control, it does so only for US forces. A good deal of US doctrine is linked in with NATO doctrine but this may not sit well with some nations, more so for those coalition allies that are not NATO members. After all, NATO is not the only active alliance in the world today.

Teaching current and developing US leaders the full range of US doctrine is time consuming enough, gaining a workable understanding of any allied doctrine is almost unachievable in a full military career. Operating at the speed of trust is an often heard phrase as an aspirational goal. Unfortunately trust is not sold in the market place, nor can it be evenly applied to a coalition on an as required basis. Trust flows from hard work and strong personal relationships. It can only be developed from a mutual understanding and respect of each other. As with all relationships this takes time, effort, and investment. Training before a coalition is formed for operations is the pathway forward in this respect. How the US elects to engage allies and prospective allies will be crucial to the health of the coalitions of the future.

It is difficult to build trust when there are institutional barriers and walls. Many of these walls are legacy obstacles erected over time and designed for bygone days. The passage of information is a good example in this respect. There was a time when for sound reasons information was tightly controlled. How information is shared across a coalition remains one of the biggest stumbling blocks in the current environment. While technology has always impacted on how information could be passed, recent advances in technology have markedly changed the means and ability of passing sensitive and time critical information. Many allied nations may not have access to the sophisticated and costly systems designed for passing, protecting, and storing such information. Understanding and effecting positive change in this area will greatly assist in the development of unity of effort for all.

All of the above elements are crucial to success in coalition operations, however without a proper strategy the efforts of the coalition will wander and result in only limited

success. A sound, agreed, appropriate, and effective strategy remains as the final capstone to be laid on the coalition construct. Unity of effort should flow from and through the strategy allowing the coalition to create synergies that might otherwise elude the leaders. The development of a strategy is perhaps the most essential task for the coalition leader as a sound strategy should draw the coalition tighter towards the agreed objectives. Crafting and sustaining a strategy in this respect is a complex and consuming multinational endeavor. For a coalition strategy to be effective it requires the full acceptance from all parties at the highest levels. This requirement means that at times the US leaders of coalitions will need to reach into the political realm of nation states to gain unity of effort. This is something that many of our military strategic leaders are ill prepared for in their current professional development.

Conclusion

War is an unmistakable human condition. Regardless of the strategic environment there will always be interests, passions, and fears which will drive and drag nation states into war. Both ancient and modern history are littered with examples of armed conflict and battle as nations have risen and fallen in pursuit of their national interests. History has also highlighted that alliances, treaties, and coalitions have been a fundamental element of national strategy and warfare as nations have bonded together to create effect in a region or across the globe.

Coalition operations are not something new in respect to the application of US foreign policy. Since gaining independence from Britain, the US has extended itself into the international environment through the use of coalitions. Initially the US was a junior member of the global coalitions that addressed world issues. Over time as the nation grew in size and capacity it was able to assume greater roles and responsibilities on the

world stage. These experiences, coupled with the evolution of the US into a world super power have seen the US lead many of the significant allied coalitions of the last 70 years.

While the complexity of modern conflict may well have brought additional burdens to the leaders of coalitions, the fundamental ability of drawing allies into the fight and making them effective remains crucial for the strategic leader. In the post modern age it is difficult to contemplate a national security event where the US would act in isolation in any significant manner. To create strategic effect through the employment of coalitions current and future US military leaders need to possess a profound understanding of coalition warfare.

Understanding the cultural landscape and being able to effectively navigate through the coalition environment is the task of the leader and planner alike at the strategic level. Several key aspects need to be understood, accepted, and embraced by senior US leaders if allied effect is to be best applied to meet national interests. These elements are effective leadership, cultural understanding, understanding of national capabilities, understanding of national interests, an agreed, accepted and understood strategy, and last, but by no means least, a level of trust and familiarity across the coalition force.

While some stronger nations might like to feel that they have little need for allies, the truth remains that allied support and effect, even from the smallest of nations on earth, can at times provide useful diplomatic, information, economic, and even military tools in all contemporary environments. Being able to accept, understand, and effectively employ “allied effect” remains a vital skill for the strategic planner and leader

of today and tomorrow. It is perhaps worth recalling the historic words of Winston Churchill on the topic of allies, "*the only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them".*[26]

Endnotes

[1] Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-42*, (Washington DC 1959, Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, USA WW II series) 1-17.

[2] Robert B. Syrassler and Victor Davies Hanson, *The Landmark Thucydides a compressive guide* to *the Peloponnesian War* (New York, Free Press 1996), 42.

[3]Ibid.,14.

[4] Ibid.,96.

[5] Ibid.,14.

[6] James B. Agnew, "*Coalition Warfare: A successful Experiment in Combined Command, 1914-18*," Parameters (Spring 1971): 55.

[7] The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year. The UN Origins of the United Nations homepage, http://www.un.org/Overview/origin.html, accessed March 15 2001.

[8] U.S. Far East Command Military History Section: Problems in Utilization of United Nations Forces. Special Study 1953

[9] The New World Encyclopedia Korean War website,http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Korean_WarIbid. (Accessed 19 March 2011)

[10] Jeffrey Grey, The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study (Manchester, England, Manchester University Press, 1988), 187

[11] Ibid., 190

[12] Departments of Defense, *2010 Quadrennial Defense Review report Department of Defense* February 2010,57

[13] "Australia offered to lead and manage a UN- sanctioned multinational force to be deployed to East Timor, and this offer was accepted by the UN. On 15 September the Security Council of the United nations unanimously adopted Resolution1264 authorizing the establishment of a peace-enforcement force, given the title International Force East Timor

(Intefet), under the provisions of Chapter VII of the united Nations Charter. Eventually 22 nations would participate in Interfet, which had a maximum strength of 11, 500. The forces available for the initial period of operations, however, mainly came from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and France." Quoted from John Crawford and Glenn Harper, *Operation East Timor The New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor 1999-2001*, (Auckland, Reed Books, 2001), 49 and 50.

[14] ISAF NATO Afghanistan Homepage, http://www.isaf.nato.int/ (accessed January 8, 2011).

[15] Carl von Clasuewitz. *On War*. (Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds, Princeton, NJ: University Press 1976). 119.

[16] ISAF is the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. It is a NATO led mission in support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, ISAF conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population. ISAF NATO Afghanistan Homepage, http://www.isaf.nato.int/ (accessed January 8, 2011).

[17] Rand Study Disjointed War Military Operations in Kosovo 1999 page 120

[18] U.S. Department of the Army, TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept 2016-2028 date 19 August 2010, page 12 Figure 3-1

[19] ISAF NATO Afghanistan Homepage, (accessed 8 January 8, 2011).

[20] "The westerner should always bear in mind that the actual content of response delivered by a person from a reactive culture represents only a small part of the significance surrounding the event." Quoted from Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide, Leading across Cultures* (Boston, MA 02116, USA, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2006), 37.

[21] "At the start of his new command, MacArthur had three pressing problems. The first of these was the organization of an adequate headquarters staff for the Southwest Pacific Command, located at first in Melbourne and later in Brisbane. General Marshall had recommended that all Allied governments be represented on his staff. In this he was reflecting President Roosevelt's desire that Dutch and particularly Australian officers be selected. MacArthur did not heed this advice: rather he appointed only U.S. officer, and he reserved the most important positions for the "Bataan Gang"." Quoted from Harry A. Gailey, *MacArthur Strike Back, Decision at Buna New Guinea 1942-1943* (Novato, CA 94945-1340, Presidio Press, 2000),18.

[22] U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership competent, confident and agile*, FM 6-22 Oct 2006 (Headquarters Department of the Army Washington, DC, 12 October 2006): This key document has some 37 individual references to culture in the index. While highlighting the issue of understanding culture on a US military leader it fails to reinforce to an appropriate level the importance of the issue.

[23] Operation Allied Force highlighted disparities between US and NATO forces so substantial as to create an impression that NATO was merely a cover for an essentially US effort. In view of declining European defense budgets, some disparities may even widen, but others could be fruitfully addressed. Bruce R. Nardulli, Walter L. Perry, Bruce Prinie, John Gordon IV, John G. McGinn, *Disjointed War Military Operations in Kosovo 1999,* (RAND for United States Amy Stanta Monica , CA 2002), page 120.

[25] George C. Herring, *America's Longest War, The United States and Vietnam 1950-1975*, (New York, NY 10020, McGraw-Hill, 2002), 106.

[26] John M. Carroll and Colin F. Baxter, *The America Military Tradition from Colonial Times to the Present*, second edition, (Lanham, Maryland 20706, Rowman & Littlefield 2006), 301.